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1907 Alumni

JOHNSON, JOHN FORD, A.B.; D.C., Carver Chiropractic College, 1909; M.C. ib., 1914; president Oklahoma Chiropractors' Association, 1912-1913; address, 700 Yale Street, Siloain Springs, Arkansas

In 1839 the Trustees conferred the degree of Bachelor of Arts on Reuben Flournoy Ford of Scott County, "a former student of this College," and in 1843 the degree of Master of Arts "in course."

NOTE—The degree of Master of Arts was given three years after graduation "in course" until 1873. From that time until 1896 it was conferred "only on those students who should accomplish the full course of study prescribed for the College." Since 1896, the degree represents one year of study in residence after graduation with the Bachelor's degree.

A Brief History

Georgetown College was the first Baptist college founded west of the Allegheny mountains. In 1829 Silas Noel, a Frankfort lawyer, jurist, and minister, led twenty-four Baptist leaders in persuading the Kentucky legislature to charter the Kentucky Baptist Education Society, which considered locating the college in several counties and on the Transylvania University campus in Lexington. Instead, the citizens of Georgetown convinced the Society's trustees to establish the college in their community by offering to raise $20,000 and by donating the assets of the defunct Rittenhouse Academy, which included a fifty-two-acre campus and land in western Kentucky. Rev. Elijah Craig, a Baptist minister, founded the Academy, in 1798, a land grant school for the community, after his 1787 classical school had failed. The college traces its roots to that early school.

The first decade of Georgetown College's existence was precarious. The first president elected, William D. Staughton, died in Washington, D.C. while on his way to assume his duties. His successor, Rev. Joel Smith Bacon, stayed two years, leaving in frustration. The Christian Reform Movement, led by Alexander Campbell, was gaining in strength and injunctions tied up the Scott County and Pawling Funds, the primary support of the fledgling college. In fear of the Campbellites gaining control of Georgetown College, Noel and

others attempted to wrest control of the Pawling Fund from the Society's trustees for the support of a new seminary that they founded near Covington, Kentucky. The Pawling Fund was not released until 1836. After two years of fighting court cases, Bacon resigned in 1832.

Old Chapel, 1898

Georgetown was nearly destroyed after Bacon's resignation. George Eaton, professor of Ancient Languages, also resigned, and the college's most popular teacher, Thornton F. Johnson, professor of Mathematics and Civil Engineering, was fired because of his collaboration with Rev. Barton W. Stone, a leader in a movement sympathetic to the Campbellites. The college had been leaderless for four years when Benjamin Franklin Farnsworth was elected president.

Fewer than ten students received degrees from Georgetown College in 1832. In 1834 the trustees rehired Johnson, who increased the enrollment. Most were from families who belonged to the Reform Movement. The faculty also increased. But Johnson left again in 1837 when a vitriolic opponent to the Reformers was hired to the faculty. He started his own academy, which deprived Georgetown College of students and faculty.

Giddings Hall, 1898

The foundation of Georgetown College was secured between 1839 and 1894. Rev. Rockwood Giddings, who became president in 1839, raised the first endowment, established an all-Baptist board of trustees, and started the first permanent college building. He brought with him from Maine the first permanent faculty: Danford Thomas and Jonathan Farnham. Rev. Howard Malcom, of Poughkeepsie, New York, was elected president to succeed the young Giddings, who died of exhaustion after a year in office. He recruited students from the length of the Mississippi Valley and established a modified classical curriculum. Malcolm also completed the first permanent building on the campus, known today as Giddings Hall, raised funds to eliminate the deficit, and bought a library and scientific equipment. During his tenure, he encouraged the establishment of Georgetown Female Academy and the organization of the college's first literary societies. After Malcom's opposition to slavery forced his resignation in

1849, his successor, Rev. Duncan Campbell, presided over the largest graduating class, in 1860, of the nineteenth century. Georgetown College closed briefly when the Civil War erupted. Large contingents of students were pro-southern. When the war ended, the small faculty struggled to rebuild. In 1877 President Basil Manly, Jr., led the college to accept an elective curriculum with less emphasis on the classics. After Manly joined the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky, his successor, Rev. Richard M. Dudley, the first alumnus to lead the college, quickly hired new professors with doctorates and raised endowment to support them. During Dudley's tenure, Professor James Jefferson Rucker led the effort to integrate women into Georgetown College's student body, beginning in 1889 and ending in 1893, when the first women graduated with men. The first women's dormitory, completed in 1895, was named in honor of his efforts. Rucker also supervised the construction of a building that housed the chapel, library, gymnasium, museum, and literary society meeting rooms.

Rucker Hall, 1958

At the turn of the century, four major buildings on campus served a student body of four hundred. Energy for entertainment was diverted from participation in literary societies to intercollegiate athletics, fraternities and sororities, and trips to Lexington on the new interurban railroad. In 1908, Dr. Arthur Yager became the third alumnus and the first lay president. Intense competition for students came from new teacher colleges and the University of Kentucky. Between 1918 and 1946, the college was in another period of extreme uncertainty. Two world wars, the Great Depression, and conflict with the General Association of Baptists in Kentucky (GABK) nearly closed Georgetown College. World War I reduced the number of male students. After the war, under the presidency of Maldon Browning Adams, the curriculum was enlarged to include business, religion, and teacher training. Greek letter organizations were temporarily banned.

By: Dr. J. Robert Snyder and Dr. Glen Edward Taul, Georgetown College Archivist

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